

Memo

To: Mayor and Council Members

From: Lisa Taylor, Interim City Manager

Date: January 19, 2024

Re: State of the City Report

Greetings, Mayor, and Council Members

This week, I will start this report with a response to the daily expressions of appreciation I receive from various citizens of Coweta about this weekly report and the transparency it brings to our organization. Throughout my career, I have heard comments from citizens about mistrust of elected officials, claiming that actions are taken and kept secret out of some effort to conduct less than ethical business. It's been my experience that this is more the exception than the rule. City councils, planning commissioners, etc. must conduct business in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, and no action taken outside official meetings can be upheld. Every meeting that takes place requires an agenda to be posted, which must include topics for discussion/approval. Although not a requirement, the City of Coweta provides additional background information as attachments to the agenda when available, and this weekly ICM Report is my effort to keep City business on the minds of citizens and Council members, and to provide background information on the pressing issues our Council members are confronted with regularly.

Many comments from the public also revolve around responsibility so I want to address this in a very transparent manner. Inherently, it is the responsibility of City of Coweta employees to manage activities and resources of this organization as effectively and efficiently as possible. I can confirm without a doubt that City employees are doing their best with the resources provided. And, as expected, it is the responsibility of elected officials, namely City Council members, to diligently ask questions, educate themselves and their constituents about various subjects related to the City as an organization, and to make educated decisions regarding city resources without interference from conflicting interests.

What is talked about very little is the responsibility of the Citizens of Coweta to make sure City employees and City Council Members have the resources we need to effectively do our jobs. At the very least of these obligations is the responsibility to shop locally when possible and feasible, so that our sales tax dollars support needs in Coweta. I understand there are things we need from time to time that either cannot be bought in Coweta, or that cost a significant amount

less outside of town. But, for the most part, we should be shopping locally. When we choose to spend our dollars in other communities, we are making the conscious decision to support services and improvements in those municipalities for their residents. On that note, I want to share one particularly important fact that many people do not know. The City of Coweta does not receive property taxes. So, please, let's do our best to shop in Coweta.

Highlights from the previous week includes the following:

Over the weekend, our crews were out around the clock repairing leaks, replacing lost water at the water treatment plant, treating streets, etc. This will cause a spike in personnel expenses as several hours of overtime was needed to keep up with everything. The City of Coweta as an organization sustained damage in a few places due to freezing temperatures. As you may be aware, we had a major freeze that burst pipes in a building at the wastewater treatment plant, froze the door handles off an emergency response vehicle, and caused the hydraulics on several trucks and equipment to freeze up. Due to icy conditions and broken-down equipment, the modified trash schedule had to be changed again. This did cause some confusion for customers. We have implemented a plan to lessen the possibility of that becoming an issue in the future. Of note, one trash truck is currently in the shop for an estimated repair cost of \$13,000. That leaves one truck running well and one that is hobbling along until it can be put in the shop for repairs. I ask for your patience as our team tries to service our customers with the tools available.

Fortunately, we did not receive any new notices of violations from DEQ this week. Our team is working to address the deficiencies as specified in the Sanitary Survey Report dated January 3, 2024. The three deficiencies requiring immediate action have been addressed. The remaining deficiencies require a corrective action plan. A few of those deficiencies have already been addressed, but others will require major capital improvements to be included in the future budget. As for the DEQ Consent Order for the Wastewater Treatment Plant, WDB Engineering has updated the sludge management plan, in response to a request from DEQ. Staff are currently reviewing options for a FOG Program (fats, oils and grease). This will come to Council in the form of an ordinance soon. As a reminder, our schedule of milestones as required in the DEQ Consent Order is as follows:

- Submit approvable plans and specifications (for new WWTP) – March 1, 2024
- Submit updated sludge Management Plan for WWTP – March 1, 2024
- Adopt approvable FOG Ordinance – April 1, 2024
- Start Construction – May 1, 2024
- Complete Construction – November 1, 2025
- Attain 6 months of compliance – May 1, 2026

I look forward to the Special Council Meeting scheduled for Tuesday, January 23, 2024, at 6 p.m. when we will have the opportunity to hear from our community members on the public safety complex.

Have a great weekend.

LT